

Message Text

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44-L

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4769

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEURT 7473

E.9. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, LE, XF

SUBJECT: LEBANESE AMBASSADOR AMMAN'S VIEWS PRESENT SITUATION
LEBANON

REF: AMMAN'S 3898

1. HAVE ALREADY ASKED DEPT TO REPEAT TO AMMAN EMBTEL 7382.
AMMAN AND TRIPOLI WERE BOTH INFO ON OUR 7369. SINCE DESPATCH
OF LATTER MESSAGE, WE TOO HAVE HEARD FROM HIGH-LEVEL RUMOR-MONGERS
ABOUT TYPE RECORDINGS MENTIONED PARA 2 REFTEL. OUR REPORTS ARE
THAT QADHAFI WANTED LEBANESE "WADE IN BLOOD UP TO THEIR KNEES".

2. BEIRUT IS REplete WITH RUMORS OF IMPORTANT LIBYAN FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE. I HAVE BEEN TRYING EVER SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE TO
GET A TREASURY ATTACHE WHO COULD EASILY TRACK DOWN SUCH RUMORS,
BUT I HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL AND ALL WE CAN REPORT IS HIGH GRADE
GOSSIP. ULTIMATE DESTINATION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT COULD WELL
BE PPS BUT RECENT MEETINGS IN TRIPOLI TEND TO CONFIRM THAT REJECT-
IONISTS HABASH, JUBRIL AND NOW HAWATANEH MAY ALSO BE DIRECT
RECIPIENTS QADHAFI LARGESSE.

3. IRAQIS, EVERYONE ASSUMES, ARE SIMILARLY SUPPORTING RADICAL
ELEMENTS, BOTH WITH WEAPONS AND MONEY.

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4. SOLH, I BELIEVE, IS A BIT PESSIMISTIC THAT KARAME WOULD NOT

BE ABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT FOR AT LEAST A MONTH OR TWO.
WHAT WORRIES ME, HOWEVER, ABOUT HIS ASSESSMENT, IS THAT HE IS
CLOSE TO FRANGIES AND HIS VIEWS MAY CONFIRM OUR WORST FEARS,
THAT FRANGIE MAY BE DISCREETLY SUPPORTING GEMAYEL AND
NOT REPEAT NOT TOO RELUCTANT TO SEE KARAME STUB HIS TOE.

5. WE HAVE NO REPEAT NO INDICATIONS THAT GENERAL GHANEM IS
RUNNING THE SHOW. HE HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE
IN UNLOADING SHIPS IN THE HARBOR AND OTHER MILITARY HAVE AT
LEAST TACKLED THE PROBLEM OF DISTRIBUTING MAIL IN LEBANON
AND SORTING MAIL DESTINED FOR OTHER COUNTRIES. WE CONFIRM THAT
THE MILITARY HAVE TRANSFERRED TO THE GENDARMERIE VEHICLES WITH
ARMAMENT ON BOARD. WE HAVE NO REPEAT NO HARD INFORMATION RE TRANS-
FER OF PERSONNEL BUT THIS MIGHT WELL HAVE OCCURRED WITH REGARD
TO TECHNICIANS, I.E. COMMUNICATORS, VEHICLE AND COMMUNICATIONS
MAINTENANCE PEOPLE. THE QUESTION IS NOT WHO IS MOST ACCEPTABLE
IN CONTROLLING INCIDENTS BUT RATHER THE POLITICAL FACT THAT THE
GENDARMERIE IS ASSIGNED SPECIFICALLY THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE
MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER, WHEREAS FOR THE MILITARY TO PLAY
SUCH AN INTERNAL ROLE IN THE COUNTRY WOULD REQUIRE A SPECIFIC
DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESIDENT AND THE DECLARATION
OF MARTIAL LAW. SUCH A DECISION HAS NOT BEEN MADE AND I DOUBT
VERY MUCH THAT IT WILL BE MADE WITHOUT THE LOCAL SITUATION
DETERIORATING A GREAT DEAL MORE.

6. RE SYRIANS, I AM RELIEVED THAT SOLH BELIEVES THEY HAVE BEEN
HELPFUL. HIS PROGNOISIS RE FUTURE INTENTIONS REPRESENTS
WIDELY HLD LEBANESE INFERIORITY COMPLEX.

4. PARA 6 IS SYMPTOMATIC OF LEBANESE SEEKING SOMEONE ELSE TO
SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS. I CONCUR 100 PERCENT WITH VIEWS
EXPRESSED BY AMBASSADOR PICKERING AND FOR THE LIFE OF ME CANNOT
SEE WHAT JORDAN COULD DO TODAY TO HELP THE LEBANESE.

8. SOLH'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SHI'A COMMUNITY IS NOT, IN MY
VIEW, ACCURATE. SHI'A UNITY IS NOT AS STRONG AS IT WAS 1 MONTHS
AGO BUT IMAM MUSA SADR IS STILL THE UNCHALLENGED LEADER AND IS DOING
WHAT HE CAN TO SUPPORT KARAME AND OTHER MODERATE ELEMENTS. THERE
HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN DEFECTIONS OF SHI'A TO THE LEBANESE FAR LEFT
AND TO SIMILARLY ORIENTED PALESTINIANS. SHI'A HOODLUMISM DID
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APPEAR DURING THE RECENT TROUBLES, TO THE DISTRESS OF THE IMAM
AND HIS ENTOURAGE. THE SHI'A ARE STILL THE UNDERPRIVILEGED
AND NOTWITHSTANDING THE IMAM'S EFFORTS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE
NOTHING TO REMEDY THIS SITUATION. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SOLH
IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK IN ADVOCATING THAT LEBANESE LEADERSHIP
DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE SHI'A COMMUNITY.
GODLEY

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